

State of Delaware – Women's Needs Subcommittee

Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy

Department of Human Resources

Regular Meeting

Dover, Cannon Building, Conference Room A

Monday, December 11, 2017

10:50 am to 12:00 pm

Attendees:

*Sherry Dorsey Walker

Sherese Brewington-Carr

Rosalia Velazquez

*Chairperson

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order and Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sherry Dorsey Walker at 10:50am.

Comments by Chairperson Sherry Walker Dorsey:

The Women's Needs Subcommittee looks at ways women are effected in their lives in different categories. The Women's Needs Subcommittee has been looking at ways they can help women in the following areas: The workforce, mentoring girls, women in the criminal justice system, immigration and domestic violence.

The Women's Needs Subcommittee Role

The Women's Needs Subcommittee should be looking at as a broad category of ideas to help women instead of looking at specific issues for all women. Family issues should be looked at also when looking at women's issues. When it comes to economics and the judicial system the Women's Needs Subcommittee should focus on women and how they can help them legally. Women should not be defined as they are, but where they are. The Women's Needs Subcommittee is low on funding, but grant in aid is possible to help with funding on some of the items that the committee will work with.

Rosalia Velazquez asked the question, "What can the Women's Needs Subcommittee do? How much money is needed to implement activities? The budget was shared with the Human Relations Commission. The Women Needs Subcommittee needs to see where resources are to do the work. There are resources from the Human Relations Commission for education, advocacy entity, informing, supporting and making provision for resources when available. Chairperson Sherry Dorsey Walker stated that four issues were brought up for the committee to look at, but the thinking is that all issues should be put together in one committee.

The ideas that the Women's Needs Subcommittee comes up with should be broad in thinking. Workforce development is one of the core issues that the subcommittee can work with. The Shriver Report, "A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink", discusses women's healthcare, well-being, and mental health issues.

Mentoring Girls:

Sherese Brewington-Carr asked the question, "Do people understand the language of women"? Do people understand cultural competency to understand what women of other cultures go through? First responders need more cultural understanding for women who are immigrants. .

Chairperson Sherry Walker Dorsey asked the question, "Under workforce development, can a program be developed to understand the language of women? Sherese Brewington-Carr thinks the issue for the language of women has more to do with women's health. The language of women and mentoring girls can be used as a strategy to help women. If looking at the language of women as a strategy, does the Women's Needs Subcommittee replace mentoring girls with health issues for women?

Rosalia Velazquez said, "The Women's Needs Subcommittee should be looking at providing women with education and tools to be sufficient". The Women's Needs Subcommittee should look at areas where the subcommittee can have the greatest impact with limited funding. The Women's Needs Subcommittee should have a list of three things that can make a difference in the house and senate with legislation. Policy making and advocacy is a good idea, but not inclusive. Data should not drive what the subcommittee does. Policy making, advocacy, self-sufficiency and resilience is the main stay of The Women's Needs Subcommittee. Progressive policy and advocacy should drive the subcommittee's agenda. The Women's Needs Subcommittee can work with women of different cultures and see what their needs are.

Domestic Violence:

Rosalia Velazquez stated, "There is a national cry for help with sexual abuse and discrimination of women". The language of women during this outcry is silence. The silence has been broken by the women who are now finding their voices and saying no to abuse. But there are still a lot of women who are silent that are from different cultures that are being abused. The culture of some women is that when they are being abused, they are silent due to fear. The Women's Needs Subcommittee have to find a way to have conversations about culture competency.

Immigration

Sherese Brewington-Carr stated, "The Women's Needs Subcommittee have to identify categories where they can help women". Immigration is a standalone category that would need attention to help immigrant women with their needs. Sherry Dorsey Walker nominated Rosalia Velazquez to spearhead a committee for immigration that is relative to women. She will work in New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties. Sherese Brewington Carr stated, "

The immigration committee has to be inclusive and provide resources to women. The immigration committee needs to look at credible organizations that it could be connected with. There were examples given of organizations, such as, Latin American Community Center, The Delaware African Caribbean Coalition, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of labor would be good connections.

While looking at the workforce downstate, under workforce development the Women's Needs Subcommittee should look into wage discrimination. Information for resources should also be shared with immigration community. If information is not being shared, the immigration community cannot benefit from programs.

Workforce Development

There are different issues each woman faces when challenging issues in life. The bills in Delaware relate to all women in the same way. The Women's Needs Subcommittee can use the office of Representative Longhurst to address women's issues that the subcommittee would like to become a bill.

There is a wage secrecy bill that ended in Delaware in 2016. The Wage Secrecy Bill requires nondisclosure of wages as a condition of employment and firing or otherwise discipline employees for sharing how much they make. What does this bill mean to women when there are wage discrepancies between men and women? The Women's Needs Subcommittee will use a lobbying handbook to learn to use laws to help women. The Women's Needs Subcommittee would like to work with the policy analyst to help learn about laws and how to implement policies.

The Hispanic community can find college opportunities if they were to use programs such as: Delaware goes to College and Delaware Can. The Department of Labor has training and employment opportunities that can help women. The Department of Labor would be a good resource that can tell the Women's Needs Subcommittee how many women are getting opportunities in work training.

Criminal Justice/Corrections

The Women's Needs Subcommittee has to get data on what other committees are doing different with recidivism and see if agencies can help with data and information related to work issues for women who are incarcerated and how is it different from men. What training can women get versus what trainings men get? What is happening to women on probation? Is there a way for people to get a business license after going to prison? What laws are on the books?

The Women's Needs Subcommittee can contact the State of Delaware Division of Professional Regulations to find out why people who have been incarcerated cannot have a professional license once they are released.

Things to do

The Women's Needs Subcommittee agreed to meet every other month in Dover at the Cannon Building at 11:00am. The Women's Needs Subcommittee agreed to do the following:

Look into data contents partners in committee

Development of policy brief and white paper to be put on web site

Find fact sheet to use in lobbying hand book

Find items that Women Commission use to have

Ex: Sewing kits, pen, and journals for give away

Adjournment:

Motion was made to adjourn by Sherry Dorsey Walker and seconded by Rosalia Velazquez.

DRAFT